

INTRODUCTION

The Tucson Historic Warehouse Arts District Master Plan grows out of sixteen years of incremental transformation of a downtown railroad warehouse district into a thriving production arts district. Artists first became interested in this area in the late 1980's after the Arizona Department of Transportation acquired many warehouse properties for demolition to build a railroad-aligned state highway. The highway was never built, but the State temporarily made the properties available to artists at very low lease rates. In these historic but neglected buildings, artists found an inexpensive and functional place to work, and the district grew. Master leaseholders managed the property, and their artist sub-tenants, on a shoestring.

Within the context of Rio Nuevo - a new City of Tucson commitment to downtown revitalization - this neglected district is emerging as an important piece of a larger downtown puzzle. The State of Arizona is transferring these properties to City of Tucson control. Anticipating this transfer, the City of Tucson sought a plan for how to manage the district and make needed improvements. The artists, fearing that their quiet economical existence would be threatened, sought a plan that would protect their interests in the face of rapid change. This Tucson Historic Warehouse Arts District Master Plan is an attempt to mediate between these needs and concerns, while it maps a new and expansive vision for the district.

